1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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Persians belong, appears to have a greater charm for the Kûrdish mountaineers than the Semitic notion of an absolute and personal Allah, which is the dominant idea of the tenets held by the *Shiavi*, or "Orthodox" Osmanlis. The Dervish Orders, who constitute the mystics of Islam, are, consequently, extremely popular with the Kûrds, and the veneration of the women for the Sheikhs, or *pîrs*, as they are called, whether living or dead, exceeds, if possible, that entertained for them by the Turkish women. For, indifferent as the Kûrds may be to the dogmas of Islam, they, like all highlanders, are exceedingly superstitious, and firmly believe in all the occult and spiritual powers laid claim to by the Dervish Sheikhs.

The saint whom the Kûrds hold in the highest reverence is the deceased Sheikh, Khaled of Sulimaniah, whom they consider equal to Abdul Kadr of Ghilân,[1] if not to the Prophet Mohammed himself, and deem it profanation to speak of by any other title than that of *Hazreti Mevlâna*—"Our Lord the Prophet." This Kûrdish *pîr*, whose sayings his countrymen dignify by the name of *hâdîs*,[2] belonged to the Nakshibendî Dervishes, a "contemplative" Order famed for the deep mystic piety of its members, and which has produced many saints eminent in the Moslem world. To the tombs of dead, or the *tekkehs*[3] of living, Dervishes, the Kûrdish

[1] A famous dervish who lived in the twelfth century, and founded the Order of the Kadiris. Wonderful stories are told of the supernatural powers possessed by this Sheikh, some of which may be found in *The Dervishes*, by J. P. Brown.

[2] The name given by Moslems to the sayings or "table talk," of Mohammed.

[3] The monasteries and temples in which the Dervishes reside and hold their services.

story, widespread in the Middle East, tells of one such illiterate approached by a peasant woman with a letter, apparently bringing news of her husband on the pilgrimage to Mecca. "Should I rejoice or weep?" she anxiously inquired of the mulla who was studying the document intently. "Weep," he answered after a short time, and the woman tore her garments and went into mourning, assuming her spouse to have died in the course of his pious errand. Actually, however, the letter announced the safe arrival of the man in question, a message ordinarily causing the greatest rejoicing and the preparation of a feast of welcome. When the pilgrim returned, he was dismayed to find his house closed in mourning, and asked the neighbors who gathered in great excitement about him the identity of the deceased. "God is greatest! you are dead, Hajji," they replied. The matter was speedily explained by discussion, and the whole party sought of the mulla some reason for his peculiar rendition. "If I told the wife to rejoice," returned the latter, "in the arrogance of her demonstrations of joy she might have tempted the Lord to destroy her husband," and all were satisfied with these words. There are both poor and wealthy mullas, and they are able to marry according to their status in this sense. The darwish, as a religious mendicant, is always a man of the lowest class, but, as one learned in esoteric lore, even persons of the highest status are initiated into the mysteries of the darwish orders. In Rowanduz one could find a darwish in a demeaned

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2: Masters E-5 (1951) 1953 MA11 Kurd MA11
Rowanduz

beggar who, among other things, performed such feats as eating pebbles for alms in the <u>chaykhanas</u>, as well as in one of the best-educated men of the community. 792 735

Turning to the Rowanduz district, it is possible to illustrate and to amplify these general remarks. First, there is a landed, hereditary aristocracy of Kurds. As far as one can gather from the meager histories of the area, the Kurds had been ruled by independent or semi-independent chieftains for an unknown period until Ottoman and Iranian power was able to extend its rule over them. This control, usually superficial, was never solidified until after the first World War. As rulers, the Kurdish chieftains led their people in war, arbitrated their quarrels, and, to some extent, directed their economy. In return for these things, they laid claim to a certain share of annual produce, animals or harvest. In some cases the chieftainship appears to have had certain democratic aspects, the new ruler, characteristically, but not necessarily, the eldest son of the deceased, selected from a noble household by an assembly of the tribesmen. In others it was purely aristocratic. As has been seen above, chieftains are many times associated with tribes, that is to say, there is no tribe without such a leader, but otherwise they are feudal overlords. Often a chieftain can be both the head of a tribal group and the "owner" of non-tribal lands and villages. The tenure of property illustrates this. Sometimes the land and flocks are owned by the 565 174 622 619 [448] 565 622 619 423

the son-in-law of the Prophet and his descendants. Some- 795
thing of the divisive aversion of the Sunnite Kurd for his eastern neighbor has already been seen, although phrased as much in ethnic as in religious terms. Of the four Medieval Sunnite schools of religious law, Hanifite, Malikite, Shafi'ite, and Hanbalite, the Kurds nominally belong to that founded by Abu Hanifa (d. 767), originally a following noted for its liberal tendencies and the admission of logic in formulating legislation, now, however, crystallized into a rite not differing too greatly from its surviving fellows.

Beyond this brief classification, it is of no pur- 771
pose here to enter into an extended discussion of the 121
theological content of Islam insofar as it does not pertain to daily life, for, not only are these matters exhaustively and competently treated elsewhere, they are largely of no moment to the townsman or chieftain. The investigator was often told, on inquiring into some matter of religion, that "one must ask the mulla these questions," just as many Christians refer weightier queries to their priest or minister. In noting the Shiite insistence that 173
the successors of the Prophet be of his own blood, the 554
sayyid ("lord") or descendant of the Tribe of Muhammad might 792
be mentioned. Many persons in the Rowandux district, as well as several in the town itself, lay claim to this distinction, which carries with it the prerogative of [292]
wearing a green turban and the enjoyment, if they choose to exploit it, of a reputation for sanctity. This descent

may be traced through either parent, and almost anyone, if genealogies were regularly kept by the commoners, could find some relative from whom the title might be claimed. The only sayyid in Rowanduz who made use of the green turban was a poor and elderly blacksmith, something of an extrovert, who also wore a beard to increase his appearance of saintliness. The chieftains, many of whom have the title, usually avoid these appearances, such as Sayyid Ahmad of Batas who dressed in the same fashion as the other aristocrats. Whether these pedigrees are genuine or bogus is impossible to say, for the Arab penetration of Kurdistan has gone on for many centuries, but one may suspect that, insofar as the title accords a little social distinction, many of these claims, at some point, are as valid as those of some pretentious Englishman who finds ancestors for himself who landed with the Conqueror or an American who discovers forebears on the Mayflower.

The religious phraseology of the townspeople is in the Arabic language. All of their prayers, pious utterances, and, indeed, their expletives are in Arabic, while everyday speech is Kurdish. Prayer will be dealt with below. The most common expletive, heard constantly in the conversation of the day, is simply Ullah, "God." It can be used in a variety of contexts, some of them pious and many quite otherwise. The tired merchant stretching himself on his cushions or bed may utter a long-drawn out Ullah, and the same is applied to a welcome glass of tea, a lovely woman, or the like. It should not be supposed, of course,

this as a career simply starts to study with some mulla 874
who already has a position, and, when judged to have 793
shown proficiency, will begin to be supported by the
mosque. Others may study at the mosque-schools in Baghdad,
Damascus, or other cities, or even seek the famous Mosque
of al-Azhar in Cairo. In the first case, the student can
ultimately assist and replace his teacher, or the latter
may find him a congregation of his own, for there is an
exchange of information of this type between the religious
leaders of a given locale. The training itself consists
in reading the Quran and other devotional works, and
committing the necessary prayers and formulae to memory.
These tasks are by no means easy, and demand intellectual
gifts above the average. The "best" mullas are those able 793
to rehearse the entire Quran from memory, an exercise
which requires almost a day. The Quran, it might be noted, [537]
is not recited in ordinary tones, but chanted, the voice [538]
rising and falling in various cadences. Because much of
it is poetry, the tonal qualities of the words, the
imagery they convey, and a dramatic and melodious delivery
can elicit the strongest emotional response in listeners.

Mullas are drawn almost exclusively from the ranks [565]
of the commoners, and no one in Rowandus could think of a
case in which a member of the aristocracy had embraced such
a career. A pious chieftain, as his age and reputation for 792
sanctity increase, becomes known as a shaykh (Arabic, "old 756
man"), a title which is sometimes hereditary, but does not

officiate in the mosque. Such persons are believed by the villagers to be able to cure illnesses and confer other blessings through some physical quality in their persons. The office of mulla is far from lucrative, although some are privately wealthy, and they are expected to be models of modest and frugal behavior. One cannot use obscenity in the presence of a mulla, and no one would think of inviting him to a drinking party. Most persons rise when a mulla enters the room, although the chieftains, if the mulla is a regular visitor, generally ignore this. The most respectful way of greeting such a person is to shake hands with him, and then kiss the palm of one's hand and place it over the heart. Mullas are not bound to celibacy, and the three in Rowanduz were married. The sons often follow their father's calling, as in the case of Mulla 'Abd al-Karim Effendi, whose father was Mulla As'ad Effendi. Of 'Abd al-Karim's family, which belongs to the wealthy commoner group, one brother was a landowner and his nephew a teacher. The mullas always wear garments in the Arab style, a single turban bound flat around a skull-cap, a long cloth cassock, and, in winter, a loosely-woven robe.

The mulla is assisted by a layman who fills the office of mu'azzin (from Arabic mu'adhdhin, after adhan, the call to prayer) in addition to his regular occupation. In Rowanduz this was one of the older townsmen, a little man full of his own importance. The primary task of the mu'azzin is giving the calls to prayer, again, a chant,

fasted for you and you should come to my help." Out of the night a man appeared who asked me my difficulty. He helped me get the mule to his feet and reload the rice. The two of us were walking along together, talking, and suddenly I discovered I was alone. Khidir Elyas lived long ago and God gave him such power to do good that he disappeared. This is why people ask his help while he is gone. When Jesus will come again with Ahmad the Mahdi, Khidir Elyas must be with them, for otherwise they cannot come. 773 776

Persons in Rowanduz who choose to do so fast "for Khidir Elyas" for three days in the fall. Between sunrise and sunset they do not allow themselves food, drink, or tobacco. Others distribute gifts of food or clothing to the poor. [735] Housewives make a sweet called Helaywat Khidir Elyas [262] which is exchanged between households at this time. The [431] exact dates of the observance could not be obtained, save that it "came just before winter." This interesting [183] custom does not have the sanction of the mullas and the purists in the town, and is not followed by all. 785 782

With the Sayran and Khidir Elyas observances, the "official" faith of Islam has been left behind, and the next subject of popular religion which requires consideration is the matter of the shaykh or holy man. Occasionally, this title is aristocratic and inherited in the male line, but it is most often accorded to persons who, because of their piety and the miraculous power they seem to enjoy, have acquired widespread reputations. Such as these can be powerful chieftains, noted for their justice, or the most humble of commoners. They are reputed to have the ability to effect miracles during their lifetimes, and this power continues to exist in their graves after death. Many of [778] 792

these graves become shrines in time, and the object of pilgrimage from nearby villages. The typical indication of a shrine is either a low, quadrilateral, rubble wall about the grave or a cairn of stones. Those who visit the shrine with some purpose characteristically tie a piece of white rag on the end of a pole and lean the pole against the inner surface of the wall. Some shrines have bundles of these crude banners standing in them. The meaning of the rag is variable. In some cases the visitor will return and reclaim it, incorporating it in a charm, while in others it is simply the sign of a vow that the suppliant, if the shaykh buried there will bring about the desired favor, will sacrifice so many animals or give so much money to the poor. The most auspicious days, it might be noted, to visit a shrine are Wednesdays and Thursdays. The six most noted shrines near the town of Rowanduz are as follows:

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1. Shaykh Piri Mawili near the village of Kani Kah. Shaykh Piri Mawili is said to have lived about two hundred years ago, "in the time of Kor Pasha."
2. Shaykh Sa'idi Qelikarak near the village of Karak. The shrine is said to be very old, dating perhaps from the time of the Islamic conquest.
3. Shaykh Saran in the village of Saran itself. Shaykh Saran is said to have died about fifty years ago.
4. Shaykh Usu Shaykhan on the road to Kawlok. "No one knows how old it is, but it is very ancient."
5. Shaykh Muhammad or Shaykh Malik, the second most famous shrine in the district, at Majji Saran.
6. Shwani Shaykh Muhammad or Shwani Mala, "The Shepherd of Shaykh Muhammad," near the shrine of

Shaykh Muhammad at Hajji Umran. This is the most famous of the group and is believed to effect miraculous cures. It is said that the Shepherd used to take out the sheep of Shaykh Muhammad each day. The pasturage was not good, and Shaykh Muhammad wondered why his sheep were so fat and healthy. One day he concealed himself and was amazed to see the Shepherd fly off through the air, with the sheep flying behind him in a line, to some rich, faroff mountain meadow. Thus Shaykh Muhammad learned of the power of this man, and asked the people to visit the Shepherd's grave before his own. A merchant in Rowandus, one 'Abd al-Sattar, claimed to have cured an ailment which he described as "sand in the urine" by drinking water obtained near this shrine. 778 792 [773] [755]

Some of these shrines may be of considerable antiquity, and an indication of this is the fact that they are in most cases associated with trees. In a region which has almost been denuded of heavier timber, it is striking to find a lone oak on some barren hillside with the grave of a holy man beneath its branches. The townspeople of Rowandus were unable to comment on this association, but investigation among the villagers might reveal some interesting views. It seems quite clear, however, that a pagan survival is represented here, a complex dating from a time in which some religious significance was attached to trees or groves. It might be remarked that cutting down such a tree, however great the need for wood, was believed to bring the greatest catastrophe. People visit these shrines for a variety of reasons, those suffering from some "incurable" malady, women who wish a male child, or men who believe themselves hampered by misfortune. The magical power in the person of the holy man, alive or dead, is termed <u>beraka</u> 778 824 [137] 778

the evil eye, but have other purposes. The bodyguard of a chieftain might carry one which protects him from gunfire, and a great number are used to cure bodily ills. One of the mullas makes a practice of writing charms of this type. Such pieces of paper are usually soaked in water and the liquid is then imbibed. Recently a poor woman with some complaint visited the medical officer and the latter wrote her a prescription which could have been filled in Erbil. Under the impression that the medical officer, who neglected to explain the matter to her, operated like the mulla, the woman took the piece of paper to her home, mixed it with water, and drank it off. It might be mentioned that she was cured, and, the doctor said, reappeared the next day to request an identical piece of paper as insurance against the illness in the future. There are many amateur practitioners of white magic in the town, darvishes, midwives, and others, some of whom demand fees and others not. The barber, Hajji Mustafa, has one panacea for all ills. He ties a piece of string about the patient's wrist and "prays" over it. The investigator was furnished with some almost classical rationalizations, of illnesses, for example, "if a man is bitten by a mad dog, he will be cured when the dog is killed."

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The darvish (from a Persian word meaning "poor" and adopted into Arabic in this sense) occupies a position of considerable importance in everyday life. It is unnecessary here to discuss the origins and the character of the darvish

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movement as it evolved in the Medieval Islamic world, a development which corresponds to the rise of monasticism in the Christian states of Europe. Men were attracted to it for a variety of motives, some great in wealth or learning who dabbled in its esoteric lore, others sincerely devoted to the service of their faith and mankind, clever charlatans who lived off the bounty of the gullible, mystics, revolutionaries, and a host of others. In short, it offered many things to many persons. There are two darwish disciplines in Kurdish Iraq, the Qadiriya order (founded by 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani who died in 1166 and whose tomb in Baghdad is the foremost Sunnite shrine in Iraq) and the Naqshbandiya order (originally begun in Central Asia in the fourteenth century). To illustrate the contrasting types of darwish, it might first be noted that the chief mulla of Rowandus, 'Abd al-Karim Affendi, is a member of the Naqshbandiya order. Mulla 'Abd al-Karim Affendi, in the judgment of the townspeople and the government elite, is an intelligent, realistic person whose interest seems to be purely intellectual. On the other hand, the most extravagant egotist in the lower ranks of the townspeople, Hajji Mustafa the barber, is a member of the Qadiriya order, and the reader will be able to appreciate something of his motives below.

In a district like that of Rowandus, men can ascend in society only by dint of considerable personal ability along certain lines. It has been noticed how youths,

impatient with normal routine and anxious of prestige, attach themselves to the chieftains as gholag or body-guards. It follows, in addition, that among the commoners there are a number of men whose attainments have brought them little as far as wealth and social standing are concerned. With such dissatisfied persons are others, the usual aberrant members of any community whose eccentricities have been adjudged harmless to others. Such as these are absorbed into the darvish movement, because, on the one hand, it offers social status of an extraordinary sort and, on the other, a channelled expression for personal peculiarities which might otherwise prove dangerous. It would be unwise to typify a darvish of the lower classes without first having dealt with the individual in question, for he might prove to be a hard-working craftsman in one case and a person mentally deficient in another. To become a darvish is almost identical to joining an American fraternity or lodge. One is initiated into its "secrets" by the older members, and becomes a party to its exclusiveness. Like the lodge member, the darvish believes himself to be set apart from the mass of men by virtue of the superior knowledge with which he has been invested. The secret of almost all darvish orders is the same, although differently phrased, a personal relationship to God which bypasses the usual conventions of the faith. This relationship, when translated into the combination of song and dance, can produce that form

of hypnosis conventionally described as religious ecstasy. 792 761 [158]
A Rowanduz guide said that one day he had encountered Hajji Mustafa and twenty or thirty of his fellows marching along a lonely road, beating tambourines and singing, in a state of complete frenzy. "I am a good friend of Hajji Mustafa," the Rowanduz said, "and have known him for years, but he did not seem to see me." Hajji Mustafa was present at this conversation, and confirmed his detachment with no little pride.

The darvishes can be organized into regular groups, 792
for example, there are some villages in which the entire adult male population belong to an order, or can operate alone. One individual pointed out as a darvish visited Rowanduz from time to time dressed in a ragged brown cassock bound at the waist with a piece of rope and obtained money from amused patrons in the tea-shops by swallowing large pebbles. The sums thus realized he spent on food and drink. This person was generally considered demented, and was occasionally looked up by the police for his outbursts. [312]
The chief exhibition of their power 792
by most darvishes, however, is snake-shewing. The de- 789
tection and handling of poisonous reptiles is considered the best evidence of a darvish's supernatural abilities and is subject to loud display. It is commonplace in Rowanduz to see some darvish, back from a snake-hunt, wandering among the guests in a tea-shop with a squirming specimen clutched in each hand. These snake-shewers [158]
often seem to be in a trance-like state, their eyes

dilated and bloodshot, as they hoarsely reiterate their achievements. They are also supposed to be able to "read" over those who have been bitten by snakes and effect their cure. They sell or give onlookers lumps of sugar on which certain symbols have been scrawled. If eaten, this sugar is believed to confer the power of snake-charming. They have other exhibitions, such as mutilating their bodies in various ways without experiencing pain. Hajji Mustafa exhibited his forearms which were covered with scars from past demonstrations. In addition to these displays and their tumultous meetings, the darvishes commonly practise white magic for those who seek their aid, but are for the most part engaged in everyday employment.

The darvishes usually wear the garb of the countryside. Hajji Mustafa wore Kurdish trousers and shirt, but disdained the sash. His headdress consisted of a skullcap with a turban wound flat about it as in the case of the mullas. On formal errands, for example, when he was called to the serai in connection with firing the Ramadan cannon, Hajji Mustafa added a light brown Arab cloak and carried a walking-stick or staff. Some darvishes bind their waists with the rosary of 99 wooden beads. The tools of Hajji Mustafa's darvish activities, observed in his house, consisted of a flag, an old rifle, a sword, a huge tambourine perhaps three feet in diameter, a begging bowl (the traditional badge of the darvish) made of a large hollowed gourd with a strap for carrying it over the shoulder, and a tattered copy of the Shahnama (Arabic, "Book") of 'Abd

al-Qadir al-Jilani. It might be noted that Hajji Mustafa was illiterate, but he loved to thumb through this "book of secrets" in public. 792 212

To illustrate further the character of the dervish, it is useful here to include the autobiography of Hajji Mustafa, which also provides an interesting commentary on life in Rowanduz. The story was recorded in the garden of Shakir Effendi with the latter present to verify some of its episodes. With the exception of the account of the journey to Iran disguised as a Jew, which sounds distinctly anecdotal, Hajji Mustafa's tale seems credible at most points, aside from its exaggerations. Certain lengthy parts of the narrative have been omitted or condensed, and others rearranged with respect to the chronology. 159 792 [124]

> My real name is Mustafa Aziz, but my name as a dervish is Khalifa Hajji Mustafa Rowanduzi. I am now about sixty years of age and I have had nine wives in my life, seven Muslims, one Christian, and one Jew. My present wife is a girl of Rowanduz who is twenty years of age. I have five children living, and of them two are boys and three are girls. One of the boys is Aziz who helps in my shop and the other is an infant. [551] [587]
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> I was born in Rowanduz and the name of my father was 'Abd al-Aziz Hasan 'Usman, a merchant here. I never went to school, but always played in the streets. The parents of the other children used to complain because I threw stones at the school-boys and broke their heads. One day my father said to me, "Mustafa, my son, you must have a trade. It is bad that you never do anything except play in the streets and cause trouble." "I have a trade whenever I want it," I told him, "I can command an army." I gathered fifty children of the town and we equipped ourselves with wooden rifles and swords. I divided the army into halves, one under myself and the other under my cousin's son. We fought several battles, and one day there were many casualities. The parents of the children who had [857]

been hurt went to the Turkish police, and I was taken to the serai. The policeman was a Turk named 'Ali Rizai. He asked me what I was doing and what this "army" was. He swore that if I told the truth he would not hurt me. I explained that my army was only a game. He asked to see how this army operated, so I gathered the children before the serai. We stood in straight lines with our wooden rifles and swords. When 'Ali Rizai saw this drill, he was amazed and let me go free. 157 772

By this time I was becoming a man, and was perhaps fifteen years of age. I went to a barber in the town and told him I wanted to learn the trade. He was afraid of me, however, because I always joked with him, telling him that I was going to hit the policeman, and I was forced to leave. Then another Turkish pasha, Shakir, came with several hundred soldiers. I took service with him, becoming a postman and a spy for the Turks. I used to carry the mail to Lake Van, a long journey on foot during which I was shot at many times. I also accompanied caravans to Azerbaijan as a muleteer. With one such caravan there was a Jew. One day he took me aside, and asked me to disguise myself as a Jew so that we could collect money from the Jewish community in Iran. To do this I shaved my head, leaving only a lock over one ear, and took the name Isaac Brunet Mishe. When we arrived at our destination in Azerbaijan, we went to the synagogue. The Jew kissed the rabbi's hand and spoke with him in Hebrew. He told him that I had threatened to become a Muslim. The rabbi came to me and said, "Isaac, my son, why do you want to become a Muslim?" "I have no money and none of the Jews help me," I said, "I must support my two sisters." The Jews collected fifty tumans and gave it to me. They also brought meat and drink to the synagogue for a banquet. While they were dining, I asked to use the latrine. I locked the latrine door on the inside and jumped from the window. Then I walked around in front of the building where the rabbi and the other Jews were sitting inside next to a big window. I shouted up to them, "Do you think I am a Jew? There is no God but God, and Muhammed is the Apostle of God!" Then I walked away, laughing because they dared not touch a Muslim. When they heard this they started beating the first Jew, the one who had asked me to disguise myself and had introduced me, the one who had hoped to gain half of the fifty tumans. Soon the Cossacks arrived and they asked this man why he was being beaten. He said, "I am only a poor Jew of Rowandus who came here to buy goods, and these people have damaged my money. [205]

I had only a little, so they started whipping me." [59]
"How much did they take?" the Cossack officer asked. [192]
"Fifty tomans," he answered, and the officers ordered the chief Kurd to pay the sum unless they wanted to be beaten also.

When the Russians came to Rowanduz, my family fled to Erbil. I was then about twenty years of age. My father lost all his wealth and became destitute. I told him not to worry, because I would find him the best possible livelihood. I went to a barbershop belonging to a man named Anis. He was shaving one man and another was waiting his turn. I told the customer waiting to be seated, equipped myself with a razor and a towel, and began shaving him. "Who are you and what are you doing?" Anis asked me. "This is not your affair," I answered. "What?" he shouted, "Get out of here. I do not want you." "If you do not want me," I said, "I want you." He was pleased with this answer, and kept me with him for some time. Gradually the war caused things to become worse, and the customers disappeared. I had to have money for my family, so I bought a [705]
seat and filled it with coloured soap. I went through the streets of Erbil crying, "Doctor! Doctor! I can cure all illnesses!" People asked me to come into their houses, but I refused until they paid a fee. When I received the money, I went in and poured my soap on the face of the sick man, smiling from the [727]
turn. I gave these sums to my father, but the Turks marched him and my brother to Turkey and they were never seen again. I managed to escape this march.

When the war ended, the British came to Iraq. I was then in the service of a notable named Hajji Hamma in Shaqlawa. There was a Major Hay in the district who spoke English, and, when he heard from Hajji Hamma what a clever man I was, he took me with him to Rowanduz. He gave me the job of giving food to 300 families of Rowanduz I had known in my childhood. While I was working for the British, all [469]
of the Kurds revolted under Shaykh Mahmud and I ran away to Erbil again. On my return to Rowanduz, I opened a tea-shop, but the business failed. After that I opened a shop to sell roasted meat, but the work was too dirty for me. Finally I went to an [43]
Armenian merchant named Jagmur, and he entrusted me [59]
with goods worth 2000 rupees to sell in the villages [72]
around Rowanduz. When I returned, I found I had 500 rupees profit. I took this money to Jagmur, and he said that because I was industrious and honest I could keep it as a gift. I made several other trips for Jagmur, always profitable, but I found travelling for this purpose bothersome. I took my money and opened a shop in Rowanduz to sell groceries. When

this prospered, I obtained a contract to furnish the army with fresh vegetables. I became thus a man of some wealth.

There was a man in Rowanduz who had great influence, Sayyid Ahmad Effendi Jaf. He begged me to become mukhtar, representative of the people to the government. Usually effendi have names of this. He advised me not to do it, because I did not have great wealth. I did not listen and the qaimmaqam posted an order which appointed me mukhtar of the town. I sought Sayyid Ahmad and pulled his beard a narrow street. "Now I am mukhtar of Rowanduz," I told him. Everyone came to visit me, however, and I had to give them free food and clothing. I lost my money, and had to sell my horse, my pistol, and most of my wardrobe. Finally, I had to give up being mukhtar and Ahmad Effendi was given the post again.

After this, I became sanitary inspector for the District, the municipality. I asked the qaimmaqam to give me full authority, and Rowanduz had never so clean. I hired a man to shout in the streets that by order of Mustafa Asis any person who was found throwing rubbish or dirty water in the streets or who neglected to sweep in front of his house or who sold food with dirt in it should be fined. The fine was five qiranis, a large sum. I also ordered that those selling food or kitchenware should have their plates shine like silver. I gathered the butchers together and told them they must cover their meat with white gauze to keep off the flies. I secretly inspected the weights, and I found that many merchants were selling less than the proper measures. I covered the top of the stream which gives Rowanduz its water with barbed wire and forbade anyone to bathe in it. No person had the right to wash his feet or his dishes in it. When people saw me, they ran for miles. On my reports, the government collected 170 qiranis from the people of Rowanduz, Kawlokan, and Dyana. My salary was not large, however, and no one appreciated what I was doing. People complained to the qaimmaqam about my fines and my orders, and I had to leave the post.

Thus I left this job and went back to my old trade as a barber. You have seen my shop in the bazar and you know that I am the best barber in Rowanduz. I became a darwish and a shaikh (arabic, "successor," presumably to the Prophet) by studying with some old men, and now I am a great teacher with students of my own. I teach them such things as cutting themselves without pain, piercing their limbs with skewers, and catching snakes. I make up poems and songs in Kurdish. My present duties are to prepare

people for burial, to perform circumcision, to fire the gun for Ramadan, to play the tambourine, to assist at ceremonies of all sorts, and to help people. I was cure illnesses by my own methods. I have now left everything in this world which is bad, and have started my prayers.

Sayyid Hemasi, of whom Hajji Mustafa speaks above, was one of the most distinguished residents of Rowanduz, although not a native of the town. He died some years ago, and his house is still pointed out. Sayyid Hemasi was not directly concerned in the feud between Mir Jamil Agha and Jamil Beg, although he was an adherent of the latter, but was closely bound up with Kurdish revolutionary activities. He was a writer, and operated the first Kurdish press in Iraq. The investigator possesses a postage stamp of the "Government of Southern Kurdistan," printed by Sayyid Hemasi for the short-lived "state" of Shaykh Mahmud. Sayyid Hemasi was engaged in a number of enterprises, some of them questionable from the government's point of view, and Hajji Mustafa, although he neglected to mention the fact, was one of his men. Hajji Mustafa also failed to relate how, during the second World War, he and several other adventurers procured police uniforms and levied customs duties from lorries going from Iran to Iraq at a point several miles in advance of the real customs station. The drivers were surprised to have to pay their tolls a second time and there was an investigation, but Hajji Mustafa escaped indictment. This exceptional man, who, in the course of his life, had been a barber, government employee, highwayman, itinerant trader, merchant, soldier, minister, owner of a tea-shop,

postman, quack doctor, roaster of meat, servant, and spy. 159
Illustrates the personality of many of the dervishes, as well [163]
as the diversity of occupations which a commoner can experience in the Rawandus area. A cheerful egotist, he discovered something in the dervish movement which offered the social status he desired, having been dissatisfied with [772] •
other fields of endeavor. In spite of his statement above, [305]
he is generally acknowledged to be the worst barber in the town, because he sacrifices attention to business to the pleasures of conversation. He and his family are tastily supported by the house of Shakir Effendi with "gifts" of food and money. Although he is considered slightly demented, [772]
the townspeople are fond of Haji Mustafa, who adds colour and noise to everyday life, and he is dearly loved by the children.

There are many miscellaneous beliefs to be recorded 771
in the town, some with obvious religious character and others not. As in the case of folktales, further investigation, particularly among the villages, might provide a large body of variant beliefs and practices. Several of the outstanding examples will suffice, for the purpose of this study, to illustrate the general character. When there has been a 789
drought which has assumed alarming proportions, the townspeople and villagers make processions out into the countryside to sacrifice one or more sheep. If they encounter a stream on their way, one of their number is good-naturedly thrown into it. At the same time, children make simple dolls of cloth and go from house to house. The inhabitants of

Bakkomori, and is called AAKAK. It is composed of 40 flower-shaped links of silver, and measures, extended, 0.750 m. Used between the links is a silver hanging bowl. It is this hanging bowl that Kanda said AAKAK from which the whole chain has apparently gained its name[1]. From the chain hang two silver bells[2], two triangular amulet cases of silver[3], two small silver watering cans[4], and two small pieces of reddish-yellow carnelian[5].

The women wore necklaces. Two such have been brought back; the one (E. 2298) is known as Adrenkor, 1.10 m. long. Amidst the 45 glass beads a grayish-white, spherical, agate bead[6] has been inserted to avert evil[7]. In addition, this necklace has hanging from it an amulet worn up to heaven, which will be discussed when reviewing later that type of charm. The other necklace (E. 2291) called Adhedaka, length 1.40 m., comprises 38 elements consisting of beads of various colours and shapes, and two white snails shells. According to Dandakkor[8] these are to avert evil. The necklace also possessed a large, cylindrical piece of stone again[9] and an amulet worn into a piece of bronzite.

Among the amulet jewellery for women are bangle ornaments intended for fastening to the carbon among the coin chains (see ornaments). A set (E. 2294-2295) known as gal amulets of two flat, oval, yellowish-red carnelians mounted in silver, greatest diam. 0.030 m., fingertold or suppose the same power of averting evil as the carnelian in the child's necklace, and furnished with pendants of bronze silver coins.

These decorative amulets are made by lesser craftsmen, and are worn either alone or mounted in necklaces. Their protective effect is due to their colour (blue), their shape (small shells), their material (bells), or their material (carnelian, stone again or amyl).

Enclosed amulets. The other type of amulet is enclosed. The amulet itself in piece of folded, written paper) is concealed in a case. This may be made of coloured material[10] like bronzite, velvet or cotton, having the shape of a square or triangular[11] package. It is worn by the women herself. This capsule can hang on a necklace worn by women[12]. (Cf. E. 2290 and E. 2291, the amulet packets of which measure 0.075 × 0.05 × 0.015 and 0.06 × 0.05 × 0.05 m., respectively). The capsule can be worn on to a fez, be attached by a safety pin to the waistcoat or to a child's costume. Each small pouches of material were worn to Kurdistan hang up on an inside wall to protect the house. The pouch can also be of metal, either a flat, triangular amulet box[13] like that already referred to, hanging from a child's shoulder (E. 2301), or like a cylinder[14] were hanging vertically from the woman's waistcoat or in her necklace. An example (E. 2292) known as Alla, is 0.002 m. in length and has been struck in a matrix. It has a number of Iranian coins attached as decoration[15]. The practice for these concealed amulets are either made at home, where it is a matter of practice made of material, or by craftsmen if they were of metal.

On the other hand the contents, the amulet itself was, so far as I could ascertain, made by itinerant mullahs (cf. p. 160). I was able to watch the manufacture of two of such amulets in the aforesaid village Ashur. Two itinerant mullahs, recognizable by the green binding round their turbans, arrived one day at the house of the Sheikh of Tegawra. On that day the village was visited by four wandering descendants of the Prophet, who called at various houses, where they did not appear to be uniformly welcome.

This category of itinerant holy men who is "preferably conspicuously clothed" appearing in villages as "wanderers of rather low status", is referred to in the case of the Kaide by Barth, who notes that

[THIS CONTINUES TOP OF P. 158 -- ANALYST]

1992 554 323 463 they make "good-luck charms, love-charms, charms against sickness, etc."[1]. None of the grown-up men of the house was home at the time. The sayyids were not received in the guest room of the house in accordance with their status as strangers of a certain rank, that an exceptional exception could be done by the women when no men were at home. They came straight in to the family's courtyard, and were invited to sit in the three-walled central room where, rather reluctantly, a dust had been spread upon—members in return for flour and sugar emptied into the beggars' bags that the sayyids carried over their shoulders. These persons appeared to rank with the shaikh's servants. No refreshment was offered them, only a single cigarette. They were not regarded as honoured guests of the house.

1992 789 463 The amulets were made whilst we watched. The one sayyid placed beside him a bottle of ink, asked the daughter of the house for two needles which he stuck in the wall by the side of the ink bottle. He then produced from his dress an oblong piece of paper on which were drawn oval lines, forming rectangular panels. These were filled in with figures, possibly also with words, but I was unable to distinguish this from the distance away I had to stand. On another piece of paper he took out was drawn a round. On the reverse side of this paper rectangular fields were made with red pencil strokes. These also were filled with figures. The paper was then folded into a triangular packet, the bottom corner being bent diagonally, and the paper was then folded together.

306 789 The needles were picked up from the wall, broken in the middle, and stuck into the triangular paper packet. The second piece of paper was also filled in with figures and then folded into a rectangular packet but without any bent corners. When the amulets were handed over to the women they were laid in a little box in which already lay other amulets not yet enclosed in material. The box was kept in a coloured tin box with articles of clothing belonging to the lady of the house. I was not allowed to view the amulets whilst wearing my spectacles. Should I do so, I was told, they would lose their power to protect the person bearing them or the house on whose wall it was to hang.

Later talks of the Arabs in Egypt with "written charms .... consisting of certain passages of the Kur'an and names of God"[2], in far as I could determine without glasses and at the distance I was forced to keep, the amulets, the making of which I had witnessed, were figure charms. That kept in enclosed in amulets, as in the case of the broken needles, is reported from Iran by Donaldson[3]. It did not appear that these amulets were made according to any formula. Amulet books are known from Afghanistan (E. 2193), and, referring to a Kurdish book of prophecies, Nikitine[4] reports that "... le même livre donne des spécimens pour les talismans utilisables dans tous les cas imaginables....".

1989 *Holy land.* Fellberg[5] refers to the Lors having a rod with a small carved wooden head at the top. One was carried in the wedding of an old man who allowed it to pass from hand to hand of those present, whereupon it was kissed and then passed along the row again, and then the other. A large wooden head, wrapped round with a flowering cloth of the holy green colour, was carried round in the village of Tepasera by one of the other four sayyids who were "working" the place at the same time. This man also tried later to visit the shaikh's house, but got no further than the steps up to the façade of the guest house, where the daughter of the house had just started to clean. As he returned

534 [591] 293 562

Sura 24, verses 30-31

of the Coran are usually considered to form the religious basis for the complete veiling practised by Muslim women, supplemented by the recommendations contained in Sura 33, verse 59, that the wives and daughters of the Faithful put on an over-garment when leaving the house in order that they shall be recognized as honest women. Sura 24, verses 30-31 runs: ("Say to the believing men that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts; that is purer for them; surely *Allāh* is aware of what they do). And say to the believing women that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts and not display their ornaments except what appears thereof, and let them wear their headcoverings over their bosoms, and not display their ornaments except to their husbands, or their fathers, or the fathers of their husbands, or their sons, or the sons of their husbands, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or those whom their right hands possess, or the male servants not having need (of women), or the children who have not attained knowledge of what is hidden of women; and let them not strike their feet so that what they hide of their ornaments may be known; and turn to *Allāh* all of you, O believers! so that you may be successful"[1].

293 [591] 562 191

It is maintained that the veiling of women was originally foreign to the Arabs and the prophet Muhammad[2], having been adopted by Islam after the prophet's death in 632 during the years of expansion in Syria and Mesopotamia. Here contact was made with the Hellenic-Byzantine empire where women led a secluded life, a custom preserved from ancient Greece. The veil was adopted as a mark of respectability as opposed to harlotry, and veiling was further extended, justifying this by reference to the two mentioned Suras of the Coran. By obtaining religious backing the veil and shawl or cowl, though varying somewhat in the different Islamic areas, became something quite different from any other clothing. It became a symbol of a religious idea and of a definite pattern of behaviour. By its anonymity, it gave women a liberty that no other dress could provide. It aroused a respect that can only be compared with that shown to a monk's habit. Unknown and unrecognizable, she in that dress represented something forbidden and protected. No man could demand to see the face hidden by the veil. Unseen, she was not only herself but also represented half the community, and in virtue of this she could demand consideration and the maintenance of certain privileges. She herself was able to see the one to whom she was speaking, but the reverse was not the case. Woodsmall[3] quotes various statements made by women who had been accustomed to wear, or still were, the veil. An Islamic woman from Alexandria says: "A veil .... presents strange paradoxes. It is a restrictive emphasis on sex relationship, and also on moral protection; a sign of utter dependence and also of freedom from responsibility; a handicap to real progress and a symbol of special privilege. In a word the veil represents an entirely different social system. Discarding it, therefore, involves a whole change of psychology impossible for a Western woman to understand .... so entirely foreign to you and so much a part of us ....".

[718]

562 293 565 484

One-garment and veil were in use in all four feminine environments in Southern Kurdistan, but in very different extents. The women of the village aristocracy did not wear them in daily life, but only when visiting a town (see p. 70). They then were worn from the moment of leaving home until they returned. For the women it was thus a sign that they were leaving a village milieu to enter an urban environment. The name applied to women of the hostile village milieu, "Many times in the city of Sulaimani I have been addressed by closely-veiled women, who, when they raised the veil, proved to

7: Barth E-5 (1951) 1953 MA11 Kurd MA11

from each household he serves. The status of the shepherd is rather low, and he is frequently a foreigner in the village. In point of fact, many of the field laborers are also of foreign origin, but they become more or less assimilated in the community, whereas the solitary occupation of the shepherd prevents or delays his complete assimilation. — In general, the sheep and goats tend to be herded by the small boys of the village — sons of laborers — and the adult shepherd or herdsman is put in charge only of the large cattle.

The position as mullah (roughly equivalent to priest), regarded as an occupational category in the economic scale, is of minor importance in the small Kurdish villages, and is generally supplemented by farming. Other resident occupational statuses are rarely found.

The following is an example of the class composition of a small tenant village:

	households	persons
absentee landowner	—	—
tenant farmers (incl. one mullah)	29	123
laborers	1	22
shepherd	1	3
widows with no near kin	2	4
total	33	152

RELIGIOUS CATEGORIES

We have so far distinguished two main hierarchies, one governing the field of political organization, and related to a scale of administrative authority, the second governing the economic field, and related to a scale of wealth. A remaining group of named status positions, less clearly hierarchically organized, governs the religious field. These are the positions of Derwish, *Sheikh*, *Seyyid*, Mullah, and *Hadji*.

Derwishes. The derwish religious fraternities illustrate, in their form and function, most clearly a general trend in the Kurdish villager's interpretation of Islam, and how the religious field may be brought into relation with the power hierarchy in the village community.

The Kurdish emphasis on power is in direct conflict with Moslem

7: Barth E-5 (1951) 1953 MA11 Kurd MA11

The Kurdish emphasis on power is in direct conflict with Moslem ideals of scholarly sanctity, of meekness towards God, and the importance of good acts — ideals to which indeed all Kurds pay lipservice, and which certainly also have some influence upon Kurdish thinking and action. Where a world religion of foreign ethnic origin has been adopted, such discrepancies between the «ethos» of the religion and of the local culture would seem to be unavoidable, especially in the case of a religion so specifically concerned with social conditions and legislation as Islam. Certainly, the Kurdish villager attempts to the best of his ability to follow Islam, and these discrepancies are largely unexpressed and unrealized. Only among the more sophisticated tradesmen of the towns can one hear in part quite explicit statements such as: «Islam is a desert religion, belonging to the Arabs, and does not suit us Kurds of the mountains.»

It is in the local trend of interpretation of a world religion, in the aspects of the religion that are over-stressed, that local sentiments exert their pressure. The main expression of un-orthodox religiosity among Kurdish villagers is found in the development of the dervish sects or religious brotherhoods, widely spread in the rural districts, and generally characteristic of the less privileged sections of the population.

Such dervish brotherhoods are probably found in all Moslem countries, but seem to vary greatly in content between different ethnic groups. Everywhere, however, their basic dogmatic position in relation to the orthodox church of Islam is the same, and apparently reflects a need among the less educated classes. Islam, as propounded in the Mosque, is a formal, coldly intellectualized doctrine of the complete separation of God and Man, of God's supreme wisdom and power and Man's knowledge of it only through the Koran, accompanied by a scholarly legal and ritualistic interpretation of this basic text. Fundamental is the complete separate nature of God and Man, and man's inability to bridge this gap. The whole heterodox gamut from Sufi mystics to essentially shamanistic spirit-medium cults represent attempts at direct communication with God — at bridging this very un-bridgeable gap. The Kurdish dervish sects occupy a position towards the shamanistic pole of this continuum. Awareness of, or communication with God, is obtained by

7: Barth E-S (1951) 1953 MA11 Kurd MA11

rhythmic incantations, drumming and rhythmic movements of the body, and self mortification; weeping and seizures are frequent.

In the following short description of some aspects of these Kurdish derwish brotherhoods, I shall attempt to illustrate the great value attached to *power*, and how this invades even the religious field in the face of the basicly fatalistic doctrines of Islam. The derwish brotherhoods constitute hierarchies in which the attainment of power, though of a very special kind, is regarded as one of the ultimate goals. At present, however, recruitment to the brotherhoods seems to be essentially from the most underprivileged class, people with minimal power and prestige in the social system. The derwish brotherhoods would thus seem to be a type of «religion of the disinherited», in which a substitute for social power is offered. Rather than being of direct relevance to the power distribution in the Kurdish village and countryside, the following should show the relevance of a concept of *power* in all fields of Kurdish culture, and constitute a justification for regarding power distribution as an essential and subjectively highly valued aspect of all Kurdish institutions.

The derwish brotherhoods are basicly associations of lay persons with religious inclinations, led by a holy man, a *Sheikh* (descendant of the Prophet). Most of the members are ordinary farmers who by a simple statement of purpose become members of the group, and thereby benefit from the holy powers vested in the *Sheikh*. Obviously, the greater the holy powers of the *Sheikh*, the more his derwish followers will benefit; and Leaders of Derwish of great repute are sought out by potential derwishes from a large neighboring area, and at times by people from very distant places.

A naive and direct statement of the fundamental idea and practice follows, being essentially a word-by-word translation of an explanation given by an ordinary village derwish, of no great standing or mystic reputation:

«There is a great man, a *Sheikh*, descendant of the Prophet. All descendants of Mohammed have some extra, religious power; this *Sheikh* has very much. Being close to that *Sheikh*, and doing as he wishes, makes a man near to God, makes his soul clearer.

[Hassan] decided to become a derwish, so as to be nearer to God.

7: Barth E-S (1951) 1953 MA11 Kurd MA11

• 712 In the next life, Mohammed will pray for all derwishes, ask God to give them pardon. To become a derwish you must renounce all the faults and evil thoughts and acts of men, and always be good. Anyone can become a derwish — young, old, man, woman. So he went to the great Sheikh Kader. And the *Sheikh* advised him to be good, always; he told him to protect Islam, follow all the ethical rules, etc. He stayed only five minutes the first time — the *Sheikh* only takes your hand in his, tells you all the rules of derwish, and blesses you. Then afterwards, you pay him regular visits, as often as you wish — once a month, or every two months, or even once a year. Sometimes you give gifts to the *Sheikh*, though you don't ever have to.»

There thus seem to be no elaborate, much less mystic, rites of initiation to membership, as reported from e. g. the Persian area. The only visible sign of derwish-hood among men (who in fact form the great majority of followers) is letting your hair grow long — though there are, incidentally, no special taboos or precautions connected with cutting it.

The explicit logic and ethical position of the group, and the motivation for persons to join it, thus seem quite simple. Between the various derwish groups there is little room for conflict, since their differences are not dogmatic, but merely a question of the efficacy and greatness of the holy powers of one holy man as compared to an other. Similarly, except for the fundamental approach, which would rarely be questioned by the uneducated villager, there is no dogmatic conflict with the official church — the same ethical and ritual rules are propounded by the Derwish Leader and the mullah, and any further admonishments and elaborations introduced by the one merely serve to support this fundamental body of ritual. The more heterodox interpretations attached to this common body of ritual are generally overlooked by the mullah as lying largely outside his domain.

712 599 112 But it would be overlooking a very important aspect of the derwish organization if these statements were taken at their face values, and it were seen merely as a more emotional and personal interpretation of Islamic doctrine; as being a religion of the disinherited

7: Barth E-5 (1951) 1953 MA11 Kurd MA11

in the same way as are numerous of the smaller sects of the Christian church. On the contrary, the theme of *power* is stressed and elaborated, corresponding to its importance in the Kurdish value system, and the more conventional religious possibilities largely played down. Great religious fervor is generally lacking among the villagers, even among dervishes. Fraser (no date), an early traveller in the area, notes with disappointment the lack of superstitious, fear of ghosts, etc. among his Kurdish friends. In accord with this, the point that is stressed is not contemplative or mystic, but might be said to be the aspects of potential power resulting from closeness to God, with great interest in the *overt signs* of this potential, overt power. It seems to satisfy the subjective needs of the underprivileged group, not by being an escapist religion of the next life, but by offering its adherents a present substitute for the highly valued political and economic powers they can not attain. To demonstrate the efficacy of the great powers they control, the dervishes rely on certain signs, the most important being their ability to do weird and amazing things, generally feats of the type one associates with Indian fakirs.

The pattern of the delegation of this power illustrates something of its nature. It all centers in the *Sheikh*, in the present example Sheikh Abdul Karim. He belongs to the same family as Sheikh Mahmud, and traces descent as well as the origins of his powers through the revered Kaka Hamma, from whom also Sheikh Mahmud has received his sacred powers. The immediate predecessor of Sheikh Abdul Karim was his father, Sheikh Kader — a man of considerable influence and intellect (he accompanied Sheikh Said on their so successful visit to the Sultan, cf. p. 42). Succession to the position as Leader of Derwish is by appointment by the *Sheikh himself*. No rule of primogeniture is observed (Sheikh Abdul Karim is the second of three brothers), the person showing the greatest ability is chosen. This need not be a son, though it usually is — naturally, it must be within the family, since descent from the Prophet is essential.

There seems to be an unresolved problem here, in that the sacred powers are part of the «biological» inheritance of the descendants of the Prophet, yet vary in strength between different lineages of them. And these lineages may increase or decline in power over a

• 772 period of time. The *Shaikh* may delegate power in his lifetime, but can not transfer it *en bloc* to his appointed successor. The relative powers of derwish leaders are evaluated, in part by the past exploits of their lineage, in part by their actual ability to demonstrate their sacred powers by «miracles» of standardized types.

The sacred powers, or «unseen power from Good forces», may be delegated to individuals for longer or shorter periods of time, so these can bless and initiate novices. Such intermediaries are often members of minor *shaikh* lineages and have some reputation and powers of their own. More important from the individual derwish's point of view however is the power of the *Shaikh* to bless his followers with the ability to perform certain feats, readily demonstrated to me, such as eating burning charcoal, extinguishing burning torches in their mouth, swallowing poisonous snakes, perforating the cheeks with pins, the abdomen with knives and spears, all without harm to the performer. According to rumor, these are only the more conservative of their activities, sessions with flying heads and strange incarnations being well within the ability of some derwishes. Characteristic of nearly all these special abilities is that they are non-instrumental, they are not directed towards any practical ends.

According to explanatory statements, the mechanics of this delegation of power is extremely simple. The faithful derwish who has shown his moral virtue and seriousness of purpose for some time by faithfully observing all the rules of derwish, may if he so wishes go to his *Shaikh* and ask to be given a specific skill or power, such as would enable him to eat burning charcoal, or perforate his abdomen without pain or harm. If the *Shaikh* deems this wise, he simply lays his hands on the derwish's head and blesses him, telling him that from now on he has that specific power. No period of training is necessary — the power has been delegated to him, and he may use this overt sign as a sign of the power vested in the *Shaikh* and his followers. — I was not able to ascertain whether specific powers actually follow family lines among derwishes, or in fact tend to be delegated after a period of residence with the Shaikh. Obviously, the above statement can be regarded only as the «party line» on the subject.

7: Barth E-5 (1951) 1953 MA11 Kurd MA11

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The situations in which most demonstrations of these special powers take place are quite significant. There is rarely any attempt on the part of the dervish to show his control over mystic forces with his own fellow villagers as an audience (though one such case was observed, following derogatory remarks to the dervish in question). Usually, the feats are performed for a group of fellow dervishes, preferably during the celebration of Moslem festivals in the village of the Shaikh, when several hundred visitors, some non-dervish as well as dervish, may assemble there. Only a quite small group was observed in action, but in this case at least there was a lack of staging and dramatic build up, a naive directness in the performance, a considerable un-rehearsed critical evaluation of each performer by his colleagues, all of which incidentally contrasted sharply with the usual tone of the performance of a western stage hypnotist or «fakir». Any gross type of hoax would be out of the question, and in fact quite pointless, since the audience generally consists of fellow dervishes. The performance seems largely given for the satisfaction of the performer himself. The personal triumph was repeatedly expressed in the question: «Does your religion give you powers like these?».

The nature of controls within the dervish brotherhood is quite informal. There is vagueness as to what would happen if a person misuses these delegated powers. Dervishes, being good, simple people simply would not misuse them — in case this did happen, the *Shaikh* would revoke the powers, and other dervishes might give the culprit a thorough beating. What types of pressures and counterpressures might be brought to bear on individuals higher in the hierarchy — since *Shaikhs* with a somewhat independent reputation — *is difficult* to say.

The *Shaikh* himself is today in a difficult position, and the extent of his actual powers difficult to evaluate. His followers being found almost wholly among the uneducated rural people, he is regarded by most persons in the landowning and educated class as a cynical opportunist, who traffics in poor peoples' ignorance. His mode of life being moderately austere, and his wealth considerably less than that of many of his critics, this does not sound altogether probable.

• 792. 554 The father of the present *Shaikh* is said to have used his influence with considerable effect — certainly, a very exhalted status is associated with the position as Leder of Derwish, as far as the village population is concerned.

The individual derwish, on he other hand, has no recognized or defined status. The relative poisne of the derwish in the village community will be discussed mre fully below, when it can be related to the other hierarchies of organization. Being largely recruited from the most underpeivileged section of the population, membership in the derwish group is often regarded as a badge of the lowest class. In face-to-face relations they re, on the other hand, afforded a certain respect, springing from an undeniable awe or fear of their strange powers.[1])

[711] Where the service of a murish is unobtainable, the local derwish tends to function in his plac, by virtue of his assumed greater knowledge of religious ritual. Thus a derwish who is generally accepted as being knowledgable, my attain some status, but that primarily by virtue of his knowledge, and not qua derwish. Thus, the power obtainable through membership in the derwish brotherhood is mainly of a subjective and substitue kind. Their special powers are of a symbolic and expressive, nt of an instrumental type. Strikingly, these special powers and strage feats are exhibited mainly in rarely exclusive derwish meetings, nd are rarely directed outward, toward village spectators — thoughmcrery, on the other hand, is made no point of, and any one whowishes to be present may attend most

[1]) Something of the position o the derwish may more clearly be illustrated by a summary characterization of thderwishes with whom I came most into contact (not including those residing in th home village of the Leader of Derwish):

a) Slightly eccentric, with considerable temper. Officiated as occasional funerals etc. Reasonable. Reputed ge healer in performing charms and abstinence with sick.

b) Rather inconsequential. Secretive, a sheep when he watch (unique in the village) started showing discrepancy with the tes — was ridiculed for this by fellow villagers.

c) and d) Quiet, ordinary with in appearance. Accused of scheming against Honoured landlords.

e) Unintelligent brother of village headman. No special accomplishments.

f) Ordinary farmer. No special accomplishments.

7: Barth E-S (1951) 1953 9A11 Kurd 9A11

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meetings. We are left with a religious brotherhood, vested with mystic powers, but where membership is regarded as a badge of low social status. The various overt signs of these mystic powers are not systematically manipulated in front of an uninitiated audience, to enhance the position of the performer; nor is the brotherhood developed into a secret society, the secrecy and exclusiveness of which might give status. The interpretation followed here, that membership in the brotherhood offers subjective satisfaction, giving the underprivileged person a field in which he feels that he too can manipulate and control power, seems the only constructive alternative.

Sheikhs and Seyyids. The category of persons called Sheikhs and Seyyids are, as the dervishes, in a somewhat ambiguous position, but they may, as we have seen in the case of Sheikh Mahmud, make use of their position to great advantage in the political field. Essentially, a Sheikh is in Kurdish a descendant of the Prophet Mohammed, reckoned patrilineally from Ali, Mohammed's son-in-law, and corresponding to the Arabic Seyyid. The general position of esteem in which such persons are held is indicated by the term itself, Sheikh in Kurdish being borrowed from the Arabic, where it is a political title for tribal chief or elder; Seyyid in the Arabic of pre-Islamic times having the similar meaning of elder. Actually, both the terms Sheikh and Seyyid are used today in Kurdish to indicate descent from the Prophet — a distinction between the two will be made later; the present discussion will concern the Sheikhs, who in Southern Kurdistan are by far the larger and more important of the two groups.

By virtue of their descent from the Prophet, Sheikhs rate high on a religious scale of sanctity, and it is believed that they embody a variable degree of common good power. This vague sanctity is however divorced from implications of greater piety; no significantly greater morality seems to be expected of the Sheikhs, and membership in the descent group does not automatically affect the social position of an individual.

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To clarify the position of the Sheikh group, its distribution and internal structure should be examined. Logically enough, Sheikhs are not found among members of tribes (*ilwar*), since tribal groups commonly patrilineal maximal lineages, and no member of the *ilwar*

7: Barth E-S (1951) 1955 NA11 Kurd NA11

can trace patrilineal descent from Ali unless the *whole tira* claims such descent. None of the South Kurdish *tira* attempt this, however. Sheikhs are consequently characteristic of the non-tribal areas, where they occupy the whole gamut of social positions from landless laborer to feudal lord.

In characteristic Kurdish fashion, Sheikh families tend to split up into small endogamous lineage segments, and, though the census materials gathered from a few villages is not statistically reliable in the matter, there is strong suggestion that FaBeDa or other close kin marriage reaches considerably higher frequency than usual in tenant villages, and approaches that found in the politically organized lineages, the *tira*. However, any elaborate organization uniting the whole Sheikh descent group, or major segments of it, such as would in fact convert it into a type of widely dispersed *tira*, is lacking. It would on the other hand be equally misleading to think of the Sheikh group as an endogamous caste, since extra-group marriages do in fact take place, and the emphasis is not on Sheikh endogamy but, in usual Kurdish fashion, on *local lineage* endogamy. It is convenient to think more in terms of these local endogamous Sheikh lineages, where they are found in the village community, and relate their comparatively higher endogamy to an effort to retain a special status in the *local* community by not dispersing kinship obligations too widely in that community. Where Sheikh families occupy higher social positions, this stress on lineage endogamy tends to disappear, or seems to reflect efforts to prevent the dispersal of family property through the multiple Koranic inheritance rights.

An example of a Sheikh lineage group of tenant farmers, residing in a small village community, might be given. Of 11 households in the village, 7 are of the Sheikh lineage, the remaining 24 belonging to various larger and smaller kin groups. Of the heads of these 7 Sheikh households, 4 have married a FaBeDa, 1 another close relative, and only 1 a non-relative from outside the community (the sister of a neighboring headman). At least in this generation, there is thus no intermarriage with other families in the local community.

The head of the Sheikh lineage is regarded as the most important man in the village, but he is not elected *kekhe* (village headman).

7: Barth E-S (1951) 1953 WAll Kurd WAll

The present Aziz, whose father and grandfather held the post before him, belongs to another, slightly larger kin block, counting at least 9 households. Furthermore, the frequency of family endogamy in this family of which the Aziz is the head is less than 10 %, which may account for his weaker appeal in the community. Thus the emphasis on the special status of the Sheikh lineage also tends to isolate this lineage, in part to their disadvantage.

The majority of the Sheikhs in the village are tenant farmers, and tend to be among the better situated. One occupies the position as mullah, to which his son will closely succeed him. However, one of the Sheikh households heads is a landless laborer, giving a class distribution in the Sheikh lineage of 1 farmers / 1 laborer, as compared to 14 farmers / 4 laborers in the remainder of the community. The class position of the Sheikh lineage as a whole is thus not significantly high.

The status of this small Sheikh lineage might be contrasted to that of the above mentioned Leaders of Darwish, or to that of Sheikh Mahmoud, both of whom have achieved their high position in part by virtue of their descent from the Prophet. The most reasonable generalization seems to be that membership in the Sheikh descent group defines a type of position in the religious field which contributes to the general esteem in which a person is held, and which may, in certain situations, contribute to justify a high position of actual power, but which in no way automatically ascribes such power to the individual.

A category of travelling holy men, similarly claiming descent from Mohammed, are given the Arabic name Seyyid by Kurdish villagers. Whereas the Kurdish Sheikhs claim descent specifically from Hussein, one of Mohammed's two grandsons, through a medieval Persian theologian, the claims of the wandering Seyyids are more variable. On the other hand, this reference to religious sanctity forms the basis of their livelihood. The spiritual Sheikh need only imply high rating on a purely religious scale of sanctity — Seyyids convert this into a definite status position, fundamental to their occupation. Profitably conspicuously clothed, and wearing green head-dress as a symbol of their status, they ride from village to village carrying old

• 792 lady books from which they can tell of the past and the future.
537 They also sell good-luck charms, love-charms, charms against sickness, etc. Being residents of the larger towns, however, they only appear on the village scene as transients of rather low status.

Diagram No. 6. The scales and sectors of the religious field.

793 *The Mullah.* Whereas the position of a khalifa depends upon his
539 rating on the scales of sanctity and sacred powers, the position of the mullah is related to the scale of sanctity, and to a scale of learning and piety. High rating on the scale of sanctity springs directly from the office, while the degree of learning and piety depends upon the individual's behavior, and is consequently variable.

793 The position as mullah is a true status position, since it defines a
795 place in an institutional hierarchy — that of the larger church
539 organization — but since it is related also to the scale of piety, the actual relative status ascribed to specific mullahs in their villages may vary considerably. Thus again, the lack of development of the concept of an *office* has its effects; any separation of the individual's official and private capacity is impossible, and no clear definition of the status of the mullah, as divorced from the individual achievements of a specific mullah, is possible. The very weak regional organization of the church is in part responsible for this — indeed, it is

[illegible] G-3 (no date) 1948 MA11 Kurd MA11
Iraq

175 in the Persian plains, lost through contact
178 with the outside world. By the time recorded history begins, Kurds and Persians were already recognised as distinct peoples, the former being known as Medes.

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Some 600 years before the birth of Christ and 1200 before the spread of Islam, a Kurdish prophet, Zerdusht (Zoroaster), grew up among the mountains of the Azerbaijan district near the Caspian Sea. The gospel that he preached, in its primitive and simple form, is to a greater extent the basis of Christianity and Islam than the adherents of those world religions usually admit. The Kurd of today, however, knows nothing of this. He is nominally a Mohammedan, and has even on occasions been stirred by the call of "Jihad"—the holy war—in the name of Islam. But beneath the surface there lurk some curious remnants of Zoroastrian tradition.

[A 383 (e)]

10:Johnson G-3 (no date) 1940 MAll Kurd MAll
Iraq

square yard of uncultivated ground around the town is used for this game. Those who cannot find space in other parts run up and down the streets playing football.

The social system of the Kurds is essentially feudal. Up to recent times no man could prosper or even feel safe unless under the protection of a powerful agha, whose armed retainers guarded the *mukis* (serfs) from any who might attempt to tyrannize the village. In return for this the agha exercised an overlordship, collecting a percentage of the crops, a fee for marriages, and other taxes. He called out the villagers to fight an enemy when required, and was generally in the position of a feudal baron of ancient England.

An agha used his family as the basis of his power. He produced as many sons as possible, who would be loyal to him in an extremity, and put each in charge of a village, or group of villages, to unite them in the common cause when necessary. If sufficiently powerful he might bring other villages under his control by the simple expedient of annexing them from less powerful protectors. Thus in many Kurdish tribes there is no blood relationship between the aghas and the *mukis*, but the aghas are of a common descent.

Another important feature in the social system is the shaikhs. Among the Arabs the term 'shaikh' signifies a tribal chief but in Kurdistan a shaikh is a holy man. Certain shaikhly families have acquired the title because they claim descent from the Prophet Mohammed, in which case it corresponds to the title of *seyyid* among other Mohammedan peoples; other shaikhs are holy men, but do not claim such ancestry. Not unnaturally the former class is the more influential and powerful.

It is unfortunate that a number of the shaikhs have not contented themselves with the religious welfare of the people. Like the priestly class throughout the world, they have at times used religious influence to increase material power, and become analogous to powerful tribal

[p 392 (e)]

Hitchcock G-3 (no date) 1941 MA11 Kurd MA11
Iraq

• 793 ogbas. But on account of the veneration
.65 in which they are held they can usually
command influence in circumstances
where that of an agha has begun to wane.

794 One day when I was sitting under a
119 leafy bower on the roof of a well-known
sheikh's house a terrific squall of wind and
rain suddenly arose. For a moment it
seemed as if the thick tree-trunks which
formed the framework of the shelter would
be torn from their foundations. A sheikhly
relative, seeing the fear on the faces of his
work, smiled benevolently, saying:

"Hasid aur! I will place my hands upon
the tree, and lo, it will not fall."

Suiting the action to the word, he
leaned his weight against the tree, and
indeed it did remain standing.

For a moment the overwhelming reli-
gious tension in the atmosphere was such
that I could scarcely refrain from echoing
the murmurs of veneration which rose
from the lips of the men around. I could

[p 893(R)]

10-Johnson C-3 (no date) 1940 MAII Kurd MAII
Iraq

• 732 Quite understandably more than a few land
719 in this village under the eye of their shaikh could not but regard him as possessing supervisionary powers.

621 In modern Iraq the power of the shaikhs
622 and aghas has been curtailed. The
732 villagers still works under his aghas as the owners of the land—the only one, in fact, who is competent to organize and supervise the work of the village; but the simplest villager now realizes that all the power of his agha or holiness of his shaikh will avail him little should he unwisely be persuaded to act contrary to the law.

900 Certain individual Iraqis who cannot claim tribal ancestry talk glibly of "breaking up the tribes" and "exterminating the aghas" as has been done in some other countries, but on the whole the Iraq government treats the matter with greater foresight and seeks merely to "break" those chiefs who use their influence against the government.

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[p. 393(c)]

NORTHERN IRAQ AND ITS PEOPLES 291 K.

resembling the drones of a bagpipe and has often a plaintive air. Kurdish dancing, however, is by no means so monotonous as Scottish. Kurds and all other mountain dwellers in Kurdistan dance what is known as the chain-dance, similar to that which is, I believe, commonly seen in the Balkans. The dancers join hands and form a ring. The piper and a drummer with a sort of tenor drum stand in the middle, and the dance consists of fairly intricate footwork while the circle moves slowly round. Often one dancer who fancy themselves as budding Nijinskys do solo dances inside the circle. Amongst the Kurds the men and women dance separately, but with the Christians men and women dance together. This does not mean, however, that Kurdish women are completely segregated or kept by themselves. As a matter of fact, they possess considerable freedom and may be seen gathering firewood, tending animals or engaged in other tasks on the mountainside, often far from their villages. 534 535 [K 543]

Up to five years ago the Barzan district of Kurdistan contained all of its savage and primitive features. Government had not penetrated and Shaikh Ahmed, a religious fanatic, was dictator. With the help of his brothers and a standing army of several hundred men he completely dominated the impoverished inhabitants, who had the sheikh's bodyguard perpetually billeted on them and who had to provide them with food, clothing and tobacco and anything else they might fancy. Any protests on the part of the villagers were discouraged by the strongest methods. Such complete supremacy did Shaikh Ahmed gain over his savage and illiterate people that they began to look upon him as a god and, though Muslims in name, turned their faces towards him in prayer rather than towards Mecca, as tradition demands. There was a Mullah in the district called Mullah Jaj, who represented himself to be the prophet of this new god. The Mullah was a very fiery and eloquent speaker and, unfortunately for himself, his fame began to surpass even that of the deity. This could not of course be tolerated, and one of Shaikh Ahmed's brothers "bumped off" the presumptuous prophet. Up to that time the Kurds had been covered, but now the Shaikh issued orders for the decoration of all copies to be found. He also withdrew the ban on the eating of pork, for wild pig were plentiful in Barzan. Armed missionaries were sent out beyond the Barzan bounds, and villages which refused to accept the Shaikh were burned and a number of the male inhabitants put to death. This state of affairs could not be allowed to continue, and the Iraq Government was forced to take action in conjunction with the British Royal Air Force. K. 617 643 [K 643] 701 702 [K 313] K. 773 779 683 794 661 671 K. [K 126] K. 731 697 696 K. 697